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Ag 841
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HORN FLIES

Enemies of Cattle



Join the fight
against these
pests.

Protect your
cattle and
increase
your income.

LEAFLET No. 270

APRIL 1950

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

LOSSES

Cattle waste an enormous amount of energy in fighting horn flies.

These flies rob cattle of thousands of gallons of blood annually.

The energy and blood lost represent great quantities of feed and forage wasted.

Horn flies interfere with normal growth and development. An animal may lose as much as one-half pound in weight a day.

Milk flow may be reduced as much as 20 per cent.

HABITS

Horn flies are primarily pests of cattle and spend most of their lives on them.

The flies are present from spring until fall. They sometimes decrease in number during hot, dry weather.

They feed by piercing the skin and sucking the blood. Usually the flies attack the backs of cattle, out of reach of the tail and the swing of the head.

To avoid hot sun or rain, horn flies may congregate on the under parts of the animal's body.

When the air is cool, the flies often rest on the base of the horns, hence the name horn flies.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EXTENSION SERVICE
AND
BUREAU OF ENTOMOLOGY AND PLANT QUARANTINE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing
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LIFE STAGES



Wings in feeding position

ADULT FLIES



Wings in resting position

Horn flies resemble houseflies, but are about half as large. The females lay their eggs on fresh manure almost immediately after it is dropped by cattle.



THE HORN FLY EGG is oblong, reddish brown, and difficult to see with the naked eye. In warm weather the eggs hatch into maggots in less than a day.



THE MAGGOT, upon hatching, enters the fresh manure, where it feeds for about 5 days. When full-grown it pupates. That is, it changes from the maggot to the resting stage. Maggots pupate on the soil beneath the dropping where they fed.



THE PUPA (which is inside the pupal case) changes to a fly in about 7 days. The flies begin to lay eggs in 2 days.

The complete life cycle from egg to egg takes only about 2 weeks.

CONTROL

Spraying cattle with an insecticide is the best means of control. However, high-pressure spraying is not important in horn fly control.

FOR DAIRY COWS—

Use 8 pounds of methoxychlor (50 percent wettable powder) to 100 gallons of water. About 2 quarts of spray will cover the average-size animal. This spray will protect cattle from horn flies for about 3 weeks.

Pyrethrum sprays are also satisfactory for killing horn flies. But more frequent treatments will be necessary. About 2 quarts of spray will cover the average-size animal.

Do not use DDT sprays on dairy cows.

FOR CATTLE OTHER THAN COWS BEING MILKED—

Use DDT, methoxychlor, TDE, or toxaphene.

Use 8 pounds of DDT, methoxychlor, or TDE (50 percent wettable powder) to 100 gallons of water. This makes a 0.5-percent spray. Apply about 2 quarts to each mature animal. If higher concentrations are used, apply proportionately less spray to each animal. Emulsion concentrates of these materials are also satisfactory.

Use toxaphene as a 0.5-percent spray made from emulsions or wettable powders. Follow manufacturers' directions in mixing and applying toxaphene, because different formulations are obtainable.

Any of these insecticides will give about 3 weeks' protection from horn flies.

For more information about insecticides and their use, consult your county agricultural agent.